

State Fights U.S. Edict to CF Industries

To End Lake Pollution by Next Week

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By JIM CORBETT

The state division of water quality control has asked the federal Environmental Protection Agency to "immediately reverse" an order that CF Industries must stop polluting Chickamauga Lake by next Thursday.

Reversing the order would give the firm 60 days to repair its pollution-control equipment and prevent the possibility of a more serious pollution problem this winter, said Jack McCormick of the water quality control regional office here.

CF Industries' pollution equipment was destroyed by an explosion Aug. 27 and the fertilizer plant began discharging untreated chemical wastes into the lake.

McCormick said the EPA order to cease the discharge gives the company the alternatives of shutting down the plant or discharging wastes into an uncompleted holding pond.

The company has indicated a preference for the latter.

In a letter to the EPA regional office in Atlanta, state officials complained that the order to cease the pollution this week will delay a long-term pollution solution by as much as a year.

"Because the ponds will be full," the letter said, "there will be no rainfall runoff storage capacity, and rainfall will cause overflow and discharge to Friar Branch on numerous occasions."

McCormick said the single holding pond now used by the plant had been plagued by overflows previously during heavy winter rains. The second pond was to be completed by Oct. 31 and then used to eliminate future overflows.

"Our position is that this

will be worse than the present discharge into Chickamauga Lake," said McCormick.

Test samples taken from the lake around the CF Industries spill site indicate that the pollution is "minor," he added, and poses no threat to the drinking-water

supply.

McCormick said the water quality control division has issued an order to the company to stop the discharge of pollutants within 60 days.

"We feel like this would give them enough time to fix their pollution equipment," he said.

EPA Denies State Call To Allow Waste in Lake

T 9-9-76 p. 1 By JIM CORBETT

Despite a request from the state division of water quality control, the Environmental Protection Agency refused Wednesday to reverse its order directing CF Industries to halt its discharge of chemical wastes into Chickamauga Lake.

Under that EPA order, CF Industries was to have halted the discharge by midnight Wednesday.

The state division of water quality control had requested that the order be "immediately reversed" to allow the company 60 days to repair pollution control equipment. The company also had requested the extension.

"We still feel that this is the best approach at this point, with the option, of course, of coming back and looking at it again at a future date," said John A. Little, deputy regional EPA director in Atlanta.

EPA and company officials will meet again Oct. 20 to discuss "unforeseen problems" and decide if the order should stand at that time, the EPA reported.

The decision to uphold the order and force the company to halt the discharge by midnight Wednesday followed a meeting in Atlanta between EPA staff members and representatives of the company. The division of water quality control asked for reversal of the order in a letter.

CF Industries, a fertilizer plant on Highway 58, began

dumping untreated chemical wastes into the lake Aug. 27 after an explosion damaged its pollution control equipment.

After learning of the order, James Dickerson, plant superintendent for CF, refused to discuss the company's reaction. His statement said: "The EPA order stands."

Jack McCormick of the water quality control office in Chattanooga said the company has previously indicated that it will use an uncompleted hold pond — which is designed to work with another pond to control rainwater runoff — to store the chemicals.

It is the use of that pond that the division of water

Quality Control would like to avoid. The company's only other alternative if they are to comply with the order, said McCormick, is to close the plant, which Dickerson estimates would cost the firm \$100,000 a day.

"Because the ponds will be full," said the state letter to EPA, "there will be no rainfall run-off storage capacity, and rainfall will cause overflow and discharge to Friar Branch on numerous occasions."

McCormick said state tests near the site indicate that the dumping of the wastes into the lake poses no threat to fish nor to the city's water supply.

Little said the company officials indicated to EPA that the repair of the pollution control equipment would take a "minimum of 20 days."

"The company has told us

that their treatment facilities could be operational by the first of October," he said.

The company should then be able to complete construction of the holding pond before winter rainfalls, he said.